

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the background of the study, research questions, the purpose of the study, the scope of the study and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

One of the building blocks of language comprehension is the ability to access the meaning of words as they are encountered and to develop an interpretation that is consistent with the context. One of the principal goals for a theory of language comprehension is to explain how the reader or listener copes with an ambiguity problem.

Ambiguity is a word, phrase, or sentence that has multiple meanings (Fromkin, Rodman, Hyams, 2003:121). Multiple meanings are activated when an ambiguous word appears in isolation and the only basis for meaning selection is the dominance of the various meaning (Miriam and Chiarello, 1998). A word or a sentence is ambiguous when it can be interpreted in more than one ways. It takes people longer process to comprehend ambiguous sentences than those which are not. People naturally look at the context in which the word or sentence appear to be able to distinguish the meaning of an ambiguous word or a sentence. A

standard example of ambiguous expression is the word *bank*, which can be meant the rim of the river or a financial institution.

There are two types of ambiguity, which are lexical ambiguity and syntactical ambiguity (Harley, 1995). Lexical ambiguity is a word that has multiple interpretations, for example, the word *pike* which can mean as a fish or a weapon. Syntactic ambiguity is phrases or sentences that have more than one meaning. A sentence is syntactically ambiguous when a sequence of words is compatible with more than one grammatical structure. Some scholars (Fromkin, Rodman, Collins, & Blair, 1990; Fromkin, Rodman, Hyams, 2007; O'Grady, Dobrovolsky, & Aronof,1997) use the term *structural* to mention such an ambiguity. The example of syntactic ambiguity is the phrase *rich men and women*. This phrase is structurally (syntactically) ambiguous since it can be presented in two structurally different ways, the first interpretation of the phrase is rich men and rich women and the second interpretation of the phrase is rich men and women.

There are some previous studies related to this study. Murhonen and Purtonen (2012) investigated ambiguity in syntactic annotation. They analyzed how many of the potentially ambiguous cases are actually ambiguous using the double-blind method. The result showed that 67% sentences are ambiguous. The research conducted by Kapadia (2012) investigated ambiguity in *The Jakarta Post* daily newspaper. The result of study showed that 113 uses of ambiguity are

found, 60 (53.10%) of them belong to structural ambiguity and 53 data (46.90%) belong to lexical ambiguity. The structural/syntactic ambiguity is more frequently appeared than lexical ambiguity. Osunuga (2013) investigated ambiguity in newspaper headline. On a total of 100 headlines, the majority (66%) was found to be ambiguity at lexical level, while the rest (34%) presented some sort of structural ambiguity. Some previous study above focused on analyzing ambiguity in the annotation, newspaper articles and newspaper headlines. But in this study the researcher is analyzing ambiguity in the skripsi.

In *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, skripsi is defined as a compulsory scientific writing as a requirement of academic education. Skripsi is a scientific writing that discusses a problem/phenomenon in the certain field of science and it is one of the requirements to fulfill the degree of Bachelor. Since skripsi is a scientific writing, it should be clear and it should avoid ambiguity that can lead to misunderstanding. If readers are not clear about what the writer are saying in a particular sentence, this may affect their overall understanding of the contribution of the skripsi. Therefore, the skripsi content should be clear thus the reader can understand what the writer are going to say in her/his skripsi. That is the reason why the study is conducted to analyze how is ambiguity and type of ambiguity mostly encountered in the skripsi of English Department Students of UNJ.

1.2 Research Question

1. How is ambiguity in the skripsi of English Department Students?
2. What types of ambiguity mostly appear in the skripsi of English Department Students?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study aim to find out:

1. The ambiguity in the skripsi of English Department students
2. Types of ambiguity mostly appear in the skripsi of English Department students.

1.4 Scope of the Study

In this study, the writer focused on investigating types of ambiguity and how is the ambiguity in the skripsi of English Department students. This study focused on analyzing the ambiguity in the chapter four of the skripsi since most of the original writings of the writer are found in that chapter.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give a better understanding about ambiguity, help students to avoid ambiguous word, phrase, clause and sentence. The result of this study is expected to be a reference and alternative information for other researchers in conducting the similar research.